LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (canceled)

2. (previously amended) The timing device according to claim 10, wherein the at least one sensor unit for scanning the first group and the at least one higher-order group of code markings consists of a single sensor-emitter-unit.

3 and 4 (canceled)

5. (previously amended) The timing device according to claim 10, wherein in the sensor unit a two-channel evaluation of the optical signals is performed.

6. (canceled)

7. (currently amended) The timing device according to claim 10, wherein the at least one code track and the groups of code markings have ~~a~~ predefined differences ~~difference~~ between their optical density levels.

8. (currently amended) The timing device according to claim 7, wherein the at least three different optical density levels correspond to at least three different gray levels which can span a range between light-blocking and almost complete

transparency.

9. (currently amended) The timing device according to claim 8, wherein the carrier of the timing device is made of a reflecting material and the groups of code markings have different degrees of reflectivity relative to the carrier and relative to each other.

10. (currently amended) A timing device comprising a carrier having a first group of code markings and at least one higher-order group of code markings disposed in at least one code track, said first and at least one higher-order group of code markings being scanned by at least one sensor unit to produce signals, said at least one sensor unit comprising a light source and a photo-transistor, ~~wherein the at least one code track has a different optical density compared to the first group,~~ wherein the code markings of the at least one higher-order group overlap with the code markings of the first group in the at least one code track, wherein the code markings of the first group are equally spaced from one another, whereas the code markings of the at least one higher-order group are distributed over the code track with an arbitrary spacing and form segments on the timing device for controlling different functions, wherein the at least one code track, the first group of code markings ~~has a predetermined optical density~~ and the at least one higher-order group of code markings ~~has an~~ have different optical density ~~different from that of the first group, wherein the groups of code markings have~~ levels in comparison to each other, so that there are at least three different optical density levels with a detectable

gradation of optical density ~~levels~~, and wherein the detectable gradation is used for generating control or position signals.

11. (previously amended) The timing device of claim 10, wherein said different functions include at least one of the functions of controlling a start position, controlling an end position, calibrating the timing device, and determining an absolute position of the timing device.

12. (currently amended) A positioning device, comprising a timing device with a carrier having a first group of code markings and at least one higher-order group of code markings disposed in at least one code track, with the code markings being scanned by at least one sensor unit for producing a signal, said at least one sensor unit comprising a light source and a photo-transistor, ~~wherein the at least one code track has a different optical density compared to the first group~~, wherein the code markings of the at least one higher-order group overlap with the code markings of the first group in the at least one code track, wherein the code markings of the first group are spaced at constant intervals from one another, whereas the code markings of the at least one higher-order group are distributed over the code track with an arbitrary spacing and form segments on the timing device for controlling different functions, and wherein the code markings of the at least one higher-order group are used for at least one of the purposes of controlling a start position, controlling an end position, calibrating the timing device, and determining an absolute position of the timing device; said positioning device further comprising a signal processing device

that converts the sensor signal into a control signal and is connected after the sensor unit, wherein the at least one code track, the first group of code markings ~~has a predetermined optical density~~ and the at least one higher-order group of code markings ~~has an~~ have different optical density ~~different from that of the first group, wherein the groups of code markings have~~ levels in comparison to each other, so that there are at least three different optical density levels with a detectable gradation of optical density ~~levels~~, and wherein the detectable gradation is used for generating control or position signals.

13. (previously amended) The timing device according to claim 10, wherein the light source is an LED.

14. (canceled)

15. (previously amended) The timing device according to claim 10, wherein in the sensor unit a multi--channel evaluation of the optical signals is performed.